



Insight

Briefing: Russian state TV renews nuclear threats against West

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At a glance:

- Top Russian propagandist Dmitry Kiselyov reiterated earlier threats of Moscow using nuclear weapons against the West in the 28 April edition of his weekly news review show on state Rossiya 1 TV
 - The threats were echoed by state TV's most prominent talk show host, Vladimir Solovyov, who called for both the US and the UK to be destroyed
 - Such rhetoric is not new on Russian state TV, with Kiselyov making similar threats since at least 2014
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Full story



| State TV host Dmitry Kiselyov insists that Russia "will use" nuclear weapons against West

On 28 April, two top Russian state TV propagandists issued renewed threats to use nuclear weapons against the West in response to increased support for Ukraine.

Dmitry Kiselyov, Russia's top propagandist and the host of state Rossiya 1 TV's Vesti Nedeli (News of the Week) weekly news roundup, asserted in the 28 April edition of the show that Russia would use nuclear weapons if Nato troops entered Ukraine to fight against Russian forces.

"The question of whether Russia will use nuclear weapons is being asked increasingly often in the West. The answer is yes. But in what circumstances?" was the programme's main headline.

Delivered over an intermittently appearing screen caption "We will use", Kiselyov's commentary repeatedly threatened the use of nuclear weapons should Nato deploy boots on the ground in Ukraine.

Kiselyov stressed that the answer to the question of whether Russia is ready to use nuclear weapons is an unambiguous yes, because "the conflict with the West over Ukraine is spreading so much that for Russia it is already a question of life or death."

The West seeks to inflict strategic defeat on Russia, leaving it "no option but to use" nuclear weapons, he went on.

The host played an excerpt from his 13 March interview [with Vladimir Putin](#) in which the Russian president suggested that withdrawing from Ukraine could have "catastrophic consequences for Russian statehood". Kiselyov reminded viewers that under a Russian presidential decree of 2 June 2020, the president can authorise the use of nuclear weapons if

"If Nato countries send their troops to Ukraine to inflict strategic defeat on Russia, this will be the very moment about which Putin once said: Why would we need a world in which there is no Russia?" Kiselyov said as heavy rockets were shown blasting off.

"In that case, we will send everything flying everywhere – Sarmat, Yars and Avangard missiles. American decision-making centres and launch sites on the ground and at sea are already in the crosshairs. France as a nuclear power will have to be disarmed instantaneously. The British Isles will simply go underwater. The technology for that is there, and we once told you about it. But it would be better not to take things that far. And that is not propaganda," Kiselyov warned.

He included an excerpt from a March 2014 edition of Vesti Nedeli in which he boasted, against the backdrop of a mushroom cloud, that Russia is "capable of turning the US into radioactive ash". At the time some people did not take the remarks seriously, "but today it is clear to everyone that that is precisely how it is", Kiselyov continued.

Independent media outlet Agentstvo [noted](#) that although Kiselyov's commentary was formally connected to a Foreign Affairs article [and](#) US plans to confiscate frozen Russian assets, it was "released in a week marked by more serious events capable of impacting the progress of war in Ukraine", like the US allocating \$61bn for military aid and admitting supplying ATACMS missiles to Ukraine.

Talks show host echoes nuclear rhetoric

Kiselyov's nuclear sabre-rattling was replicated by another leading Russian propagandist, talk show host Vladimir Solovyov, in what appeared to be a coordinated effort.

Solovyov echoed Kiselyov's menacing rhetoric in the 28 April edition [of](#) his talk show, Voskresny Vecher s Vladimirom Solovyovym (Sunday Night with Vladimir Solovyov), aired shortly after the news review on the same channel, Rossiya 1.

As the West supplies increasingly long-range weapons to Ukraine, "we have things to add on this stairway of escalation. The West is ready for any escalation to preserve its hegemony, and this will end with the West simply not existing," Solovyov stated in his introductory remarks.

Moscow State University professor Lt Gen (retd) Yevgeny Buzhinsky also supported the proposal of "climbing up this escalation stairway a little" and striking US, British and French drones over the Black Sea.

"We fear escalation, what escalation? The Strait named after Comrade Stalin calms any escalation down in a moment," Solovyov proclaimed, in reference to suggestions [that](#) Russia

Solovyov also suggested that the UK should be destroyed if, as Defence Secretary [Grant Shapps suggested](#) ⁷, Britain were to go to war with Russia.

"What other option is there?" the presenter exclaimed.

Such threats have been [made repeatedly by Russian propagandists](#) over many years but their frequency ebbs and flows with the current political situation.

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